



The Legislature is Over—What happened to the Bed Tax?

When all is said and done, the Bed Tax is virtually unchanged. The rate is still 4%. The distribution formula basically stays the same; however, a new Senate bill now allows resort towns or areas to qualify for CVB status if they meet certain criteria. At this point, Big Sky is the only area that qualifies under this bill. We will now have 10 CVBs as of July 1, 2001. The funding for the Big Sky CVB flows from revenue currently going to Yellowstone Country. The \$400,000/year for the Montana Heritage Commission was reauthorized for six more years. The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission will be able to borrow \$3 million from the Board of Investments for their programs. This loan will be repaid through the sale of special Lewis and Clark license plates. Proposals to secure long-term funding for cultural and heritage projects fell by the wayside.

The current Travel Montana budget is being reduced by \$314,000/year. This is broken down (approximately) as follows:

- \$100,000/year for the rent on the building to store the Scriver collection.
- \$100,000/year to fund the "non-reoccurring" tourism events program.
- \$114,000/year to be used by the Montana Historical Society for administration and other purposes in regards to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

Given the nature of the session, I feel that the tourism industry came out of it as well as can be expected. Personally, I am disappointed that a long-term funding mechanism could not be found for our cultural/heritage responsibilities. The longer we put off addressing these needs, the more acute they will become. However, the democratic process is one in which compromises and concessions need to be made, and you get to try again the next time around.

Tourism's role in Montana's economy is still not well understood. However, I have noticed that there is a growing realization among legislators that we have become a major player in our communities and economy. There was no fundamental tax reform measure passed. The debate on how we can get non-residents to take up some of our tax burden will continue during the interim.

The successes we had over the past four months are due in no small part to the comments and involvement of people like you. We, at Travel Montana, look forward to working with you to continue to grow tourism in our state in a manner that is consistent with the hopes and desires of our citizens. Together, we do make a difference! Best wishes for a healthy and successful summer season.

Sincerely,

Matthew Cohn
Director, Travel Montana

Did You Know?

- Many of the presentations from the 2001 Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation can be found on our Intranet site www.travel-montana.state.mt.us/conference/speakers.htm
- The Handmade in America workshop, presented at the Governor's Conference, is available on video. The cost is \$30. To receive a copy call the Missoula Cultural Council at 406-721-9620 or e-mail mcc@missoulacultural.org
- SUPERHOST! is scheduling this year's trainings. If you are interested in participating call Jeri Mae Rowley at 406-756-3674 or e-mail superhost@fvcc.cc.mt.us
- We are distributing the "Update" electronically. To receive this monthly publication online you may sign up on our Intranet site www.travel-montana.state.mt.us
- Fish, Wildlife and Parks is accepting recreation project grant applications. Project applications may include facilities such as ballparks, swimming pools, campgrounds, skating rinks and walking trails. For more information contact Walt Timmerman at 406-444-3753.
- The Travel Industry Association of America is sponsoring a national convention for attraction professionals, May 31 - June 1, 2001. Anyone with an attraction to promote is welcome. Need details? Contact Sarah Doud at 202-408-8422.
- Adventure Cycling of Missoula is celebrating its 25th year of developing bicycling routes and tours. A Silver Anniversary celebration will be held July 20-21. For more information call 800-755-2453 or check out www.adventurecycling.org

Expanding Montana's Economy

Recently Big Mountain and Big Sky announced plans to expand services at their resorts. The expansions have a combined price tag of \$700 million. According to Matthew Cohn, these projects represent the investment being made by the tourism industry toward a healthy economic future for the state. Cohn notes that the Advanced Silicon Materials, Inc (ASMI) plant in Butte, costing \$475 million to construct, and the expansion of the Stillwater Mine at \$300 million are both examples of other businesses making a commitment to our state's diverse economy.

Air service to Montana is also expanding. Northwest Airlines announced that it will add a daily flight into Billings July 1 and United Airlines will begin to serve Missoula in June. United began service to Bozeman last November. "We believe the demand for more airline seats is the direct result of the growth of tourism. However, it is not only the tourism industry that benefits from additional flights; expanded air service creates a better business climate for those looking to relocate their business or start a new business in the state and it gives Montanans more options when they fly."

An Added Incentive

The 2002-2003 edition of the Montana Meeting Planner's Guide is in the works. If you are involved in the meetings and incentive travel industry and would like to advertise in the guide, contact Travel Montana's Marlee Iverson at 406-444-4107 or e-mail marlee@visitmt.com for more details.

Warming Up to Montana

Our warm season advertising campaign is in full swing and for the fourth year our Internet site is the number one source of information for potential visitors. While traditional responses from our magazine ads have dropped, visitation to our website is reaching record numbers. We include visitmt.com on all of our print and television ads and our direct mailings. Our e-mail campaigns have also been successful in bringing in new web visitors. We have averaged a 4% click-through rate, which is a good return. Another trend that we have found is the increase of folks directly requesting information from our site.

On the television front, our commercial is doing very well. Inquiries have been particularly strong from the Travel Channel, the History Channel and the Discovery Channel. And our long-standing Montana/Wyoming Co-op campaign underwent a very successful restructuring this season. On the 3parks.com website we added a direct mail piece, permission-based e-mail campaigns, search engine listings and a guestbook feature. Inquiries for the overall campaign are up over 350% from last year.

Signs of the Times

The Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI) received a \$20,000 National Park Service (NPS) Challenge Cost Share Grant to construct and erect Lewis and Clark signage in strategic locations in Montana. Orientation kiosks that tell the entire story of the expedition in Montana will be placed in Wibaux at the Department of Transportation rest area and the Travel Montana-supported

Visitor Information Center and erected in the Blackfoot River corridor. Several site-specific Lewis and Clark interpretive kiosks will also be placed in the corridor. These projects are slated for completion by the summer of 2002.

Courting the International Visitor

Travel Montana's Overseas Marketing Manager, Pam Gosink, had a busy winter representing Montana at five international trade shows. Pam's planes landed in Italy, the United Kingdom, Berlin, Paris and the RMI Roundup in Sun Valley, Idaho. She reports that all of the trade shows were a success. If you are interested in receiving leads from the shows you can find them on our Intranet site www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPROGRAMS/OverseasMarketing.htm or call Pam at 406-444-4384.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

May

- 5-9 TIA's Pow Wow Trade Show, Orlando
- 6-12 National Tourism Week
- 12-23 Lewis & Clark Group Tour Fam from St. Louis, MO to Great Falls, MT
- 17-23 Taiwan Media Fam
- 31-6/5 From Fire to Rebirth Fam Tour, Glacier and Yellowstone Countries

June

- 4-5 Tourism Advisory Council Mtg, Whitefish
- 6-12 Women's Outdoor Adventure Fam Tour, Russell and Gold West Countries

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site:
travelmontana.state.mt.us



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